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**THE NEED FOR COUNSELLORS IN
PREDOMINANTLY BLACK PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

BY

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SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
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DECLARATION

I HEREBY DEACLARE THAT THIS WORK IS MY OWN WORK BOTH IN
CONCEPTION AND EXECUTION, AND THAT ALL THE SOURCES I HAVE
REFERRED TO OR QUOTED HAVE BEEN ACKNOWLEDGED AND
INDICATED BY MEANS OF COMPLETE REFERENCES.

SIGNED:.....

DEDICATION

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED TO: -

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TABLE OF CONTENT

CONTENT	PAGES
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Motivation of the study	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	3
1.3 Aims of the study	4
1.4 Hypotheses	4
1.5 Definition of concepts	5
1.5.1 Counselling	5
1.5.2 Behavioural problems	6
1.5.3 Emotional problems	7
1.5.4 Exceptional child	7
1.5.5 Learning disability	8
1.5.6 A Black child	8
CHAPTER TWO : LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1 The school psychological services	9
2.2 Counselling services in predominantly Black primary schools	11
2.3 The nature of school counseling	12
2.4 Teachers and counseling	22
2.5 Psychological problems in young children	27
2.6 Conclusion	30

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction	31
3.2 Administrative procedures	32
3.3 The population and sample	33
3.4 Questionnaire	34
3.5 Data collection and treatment	35
3.6 Conclusion	36

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.1 Characteristics of respondents	37
4.2 Learners who require counseling services	44
4.3 The prevalence of emotional and behavioural problems that require the services of a counselor	45
4.4 Professionals who provide counseling services in predominantly Black primary Schools	47
4.5 Conclusion	50

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Discussions and results of the study	52
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CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion	56
6.2 Recommendations	58

REFERENCES

60

APPENDICES

A - Letter to the regional manager

B - Letter to the district manager

C - Letter to the principals of schools

D - Questionnaire

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the availability of counselling services in predominantly Black primary schools. It is a questionnaire-based field study employing basic descriptive statistics. The study set the following aims which guided the investigation:

- (1) To determine who provide counselling services;
- (2) To identify the percentage of learners who require counselling services;
- (3) To identify the prevalence of emotional and behavioral problems which require services of a counselor.

Three hypotheses were tested:

- (1) There are few or no counselling services available in predominantly Black primary schools.
- (2) Teachers in predominantly Black primary schools lack skills for identifying learners.
- (3) Teachers in predominantly Black primary schools are unable to provide counselling.

The sample for the study comprises of 100 randomly selected educators, both males and females, from Predominantly Black primary schools in the South Durban Region of KwaZulu-Natal.

The study showed that 68% of counselling in the sampled schools was provided by educators who do not have the necessary counselling skills. These services were provided by ordinary educators on voluntary basis. Ninety-seven percent of the educators estimated that at least 20% of the learners were in need of counselling.

Victims of sexual abuse, aggression towards others and victims of neglect were ranked first, second and third respectively as the most frequently experienced problems by learners.

All three hypotheses were confirmed by the findings. Some recommendations are made in the light of the findings.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 MOTIVATION

The experience of failing among young learners evokes a range of human responses which include fear, anxiety, panic, stigmatisation, hate, mistrust, prejudice and rejection. This is because it is a known fact that learners who fail in lower grades are likely to drop out in secondary school. Therefore, for a learner to learn that he/she is unable to perform at a level expected of him/her is likely to evoke tremendous emotional stress and uncertainty about the future. Hence the need for the provision of counselling in primary schools as emphasized by Cheramic and Sutter, 1993 and Uys, 1992.

Even though teachers implement problem prevention programmes, most learners come to school everyday and bring with them different problems. What social researchers need to do now, is to establish the need for counselling services in primary schools by Maimgren, Abbott, & Hawkins, 1999; Kahl and Fine, 1978.

Data from a South African survey (Schneider, 2000) of the prevalence of disabilities (including intellectual, personal, and emotional problems) suggest that neither special nor mainstream schools are currently providing the quality education that disabled children need in order to develop their potential.

The data further showed the following: most children who were disabled by the time they were eligible for primary school, were attending mainstream schools; of all those who were disabled before the age of 18 years, 79% had attended a mainstream primary school, 12% had attended a special primary school, 3% a special class in a mainstream primary school, and 5% had not attended school.

The purpose of counselling is to provide psychological and social support to those learners already experiencing problems. This is done through assisting them to take charge of their situation. Preventive and supportive counselling exist largely because the learners directly experiencing problems need it, due sometimes to a lack of parental support. The concept of counselling is novel to most cultures in South Africa. This raises a concern about the appropriateness, role and effectiveness of counselling as a critical component of teaching and learning among traditional Black society in South Africa.

It is therefore a challenge for social researchers to examine the need for counselling in primary schools in order to reduce the psychological and social impact of problems in learners (Uys, 1992; Ford & Migles, 1979).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Counselling in predominantly Black primary schools is not conducted by full time trained counsellors. Health providers and anyone with the necessary knowledge and commitment take on the function of counselling (Uys, 1992). This poses a risk to the health of learners who experience psychological and emotional difficulties.

According to Gilmore and Chandy (1973a) in order to offer effective counselling, counsellors have to meet a number of requirements which include: a good working knowledge of basic counselling skills, awareness of differences in clients' cultural background and experience with psychological and clinical management of certain conditions. This indicates a dire need for professional counselling services in schools. The present study investigates the research problem 'what is the nature of counselling services in predominantly Black primary schools?'

1.3. AIMS OF THE STUDY

The focus of the present study is counselling in the predominantly Black primary schools, with the following specific aims which guided the investigation:

- (1) To determine who provides counselling services;
- (2) To identify the percentage of learners who require counselling services;
- (3) To identify the prevalence of emotional and behavioural problems that require the services of a counsellor.

1.4. HYPOTHESES

The present study attempts to test the following three hypotheses:

- (1) There are few or no counselling services available in predominantly Black primary schools.

(2) Teachers in predominantly Black primary schools lack skills for identifying learners who experience problems that need counselling.

(3) Teachers in predominantly Black primary schools are unable to provide counselling.

1.5. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

1.5.1 Counselling

In this study counselling refers to an ongoing process that involves a counsellor who provides emotional support to a learner who experiences emotional and behavioural problems, until the learner can deal with his or her problems alone (Uys, 1992; Abel and Burke, 1985; Barker, 1965).

Counselling can also be defined as a process of helping learners who are experiencing problems in whatever areas that may arise. It is in counselling that the primary school children may be given the opportunity to talk about their problems and to work through times of stress (Milner, 1974).

The American Psychological Association's Division of Counselling Psychology defines this concept as the process of helping individuals towards overcoming obstacles to their personal growth, whenever they may be encountered. For the purpose of this study counselling can be define as a process of assisting young learners to change and to deal with their problems, not by providing solutions, but by creating favourable conditions for them to achieve their own insight, and to change

from within. In this way they may perceive things in different ways and gain confidence in their abilities to use their own resources and are encourage to assume self direction and responsibility for their lives (Gillis, 1992). This helps to boost their self- esteem.

1.5.2. Behavioural problems

In this study behaviour problems refer to unwanted and intense tendencies or acts a learner in a school may show for a longer period than is expected in a learner of that age. These tendencies or acts include disobedience, lack of interest, school phobia, truancy and day -dreaming (Kapp, 1991).

1.5.3 Emotional problems

In this study emotional problems refer to those problems that a learner exhibits which cannot be explained in terms of intellectual, sensory or health factors but is characterised by inability to establish and maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationship with peer group and adults; inappropriate emotional expressions under favourable circumstances and a tendency to develop physical symptoms, pain and fears associated with personal or school problems (APA, 1994).

1.5.4. Exceptional child

There have been many attempts to define the exceptional child. Some people use this term when referring to the particularly bright child with unusual talents. According to Kirk and Gallagher (1989), an exceptional child is one who differs from the average or normal child in mental characteristics, sensory abilities, communication abilities, social behavior or physical characteristics. These differences must be to such an extent that the child requires a modification of the educational programs, school practices or special education services to maximize his/her capacity.

1.5.5. Learning disability

In practice, a learning disability is defined on the basis of findings gained in a series of assessments that contrast potential with performance (Clarizio and McCoy, 1983).

1.5.6. A Black child

In this study a black child is someone that was born and bred in the Southern part of Africa but whose great-great grandparents immigrated from the middle part of this continent called Africa and known as the Ngunis'.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education is divided into eight regions: Durban North, Durban South, Empangeni, Ladysmith, Pietermaritzburg, Port Shepstone, Ulundi and Vryheid. These regions were formed after the amalgamation of former racially segregated education departments in KwaZulu-Natal. There are school psychological services, which ought to provide counselling services in primary schools.

The Department of Education has two levels, namely provincial and regional. At provincial level, school psychological services fall under the section of Education Support Services. The School Psychological Service is made up of three units, namely Psychological Services, Guidance Services, and Special Education Services. At the regional level, school psychological services fall under auxiliary services. Auxiliary services unit is made up of the following sections: school guidance, psychological services, sports and recreation, youth affairs, and specialized educational needs.

School psychological services at provincial level are manned by one Director who is the head, and three Chief Education Specialists, one responsible for guidance services, another for specialized education, and the third for psychological services.

The Chief Education Specialist comes among the following staff, and heads the auxiliary services at regional level: special needs, educational need, school guidance, sports and recreation, and psychological services. A senior education specialist mans each unit. School psychological services at regional level are supposed to be located within regional offices. This service department does not provide direct and regular service to primary schools, especially those that are predominantly Black. This further motivated the researcher to undertake this study to determine the need for counsellors in predominantly Black primary schools.

In most of the primary schools under the former KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture, there were no clear guidelines for counselling learners whereas in primary schools in the former Natal Education Department there were clear guidelines. In the former Natal Education Department primary schools, school counsellors rendered a valuable counselling service to primary schools and its learners.

Inspectors, educational psychologists and psychometrics usually managed such services and provided the necessary support. Counselling in primary schools is crucial to any programme that involves learners.

The situation is not the same in all the primary schools in South Africa. In the previously advantaged primary schools, there are clear guidelines for referring learners to school counsellors who are thought to be immediately available in those primary schools. However, in the predominantly Black primary schools, school counsellors are non-existent.

2.2. COUNSELLING SERVICES IN PREDOMINANTLY BLACK PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Teachers in primary schools are there to teach, but moreover they tend to extend their responsibilities to include counselling services. This is due to the blame teachers receive when a learner fails to learn. The blame is usually from disappointed parents, beleaguered administrators and other members of the community who are concerned with the learner's progress in school. Also the blame may come from the following year's teacher who feels the learner is inadequately prepared for the next grade (White, 1989).

At times due to desperation a teacher may seek assistance from an external source. He/she may seek assistance from school psychological services personnel attached to the Department of Education, and these personnel are supposed to support a number of schools. Because of the volume of their work sometimes they fail to attend to all the cases that are brought to them. There are a number of other referral services that are available, but usually at a cost. This makes it unaffordable to most people.

There are many factors that drive teachers to provide some degree of basic counselling services, especially in predominantly Black primary schools. These factors stem from many sources, e.g. (1) A teacher's conviction that the learner is underachieving; (2) A parent's claim that his / her child is intellectually brighter than the teacher thinks; (3) A teacher's concern for the learner's adjustment in the community; and (4) A learner's disruptive behaviour in the classroom (White, 1989).

2.3 THE NATURE OF SCHOOL COUNSELLING

Teachers believe that learners, like adults, need a detached yet sympathetic and empathetic person to assist in resolving a troubling situation.

This reveals that our feelings are better not pushed aside and kept inside but brought out into the open and shared with a trusted person in a proper and safe setting. In schools teachers are usually the most trusted persons by the learners. The classroom teacher is in regular contact with the child, has knowledge of the curriculum and can make changes to the learning environment. Theoretically the teacher is in the best position to co-ordinate the learning process.

However, while some teachers have the necessary training and experience to carry out this task, others lack the knowledge, experience, or the appropriate attitudes to provide suitable supports for learners who encounter learning difficulties (Jones, Bill & Quah, 1996).

Derbyshire (1994) says that the responsibility for the initial identification of a learning disabled child rests with the teacher who is usually one of the first to notice when the child's development in general, and his/her learning in particular, become problematic, as well as which aspects of learning are involved. He says too, that learning problems often give rise to emotional and behavioural difficulties. Uys (1992) suggests that the challenge of counselling learners in primary schools means that untrained teachers must develop themselves in counselling issues.

Involvement of primary school learners in counselling must be considered a priority, because this is where learners are still young and need more support. Many arguments as to why learners need to be involved in counselling have been raised, including the notion that counselling sessions are verbally sophisticated, the sessions demand more attention, and some counsellors are uncomfortable with learners or frankly do not like them. Another reason is that some teachers are not trained in child development; hence they are not capable of dealing sensitively with younger learners (Kapp, 1991).

A few counselling skills such as making gestures appropriate to the situation, without imposing more intimacy than the learner desires, and not communicating a negative message, might somehow help if teachers were to be trained on these (Barton and Garbak, 1985).

Psychological counselling involves and includes an explicit offer of time, support and expertise to a learner, which is or can be accepted by that particular learner without any pressure from the counsellor. The proper use of counselling skills is important. Counselling encompasses growth and remediation especially to learners in the primary school.

It may be conducted on one learner, a group of learners or, sometimes, families and systems that are experiencing difficulties due to a learner experiencing problems. Unfortunately, most teachers do not have the expertise or training in counselling.

Kaplan, Clancy and Chrin (1977) found that those teachers who were able to handle problem behaviour most successfully were observed to be better prepared, better organised and had better management skills than those who could deal less effectively with disturbing behaviours.

According to Cheramic and Sutter (1993), teachers view counselling as basically a good service. If it was carried out sensitively and expertly, counselling had the potential to heal both emotional and physical distress in primary school learners.

In countries like the United States of America, Canada and Great Britain, a number of studies have been conducted on teacher perception of school counselling services (Cheramic and Sutter, 1993; Abel and Burke, 1985; Bardon, 1982; Severson, Pickett & Hetrik, 1985; Bardon, 1981; Dean, 1980; Ford and Migles, 1979; Kahl and Fine, 1978, Gilmore and Chandy, 1973; Lucas and Jones, 1970; Roberts, 1970; Barker, 1965; Styles, 1965).

Results from these studies showed that teachers did not have consistent views on the roles and functions of school counsellors.

No similar studies have been conducted in South Africa among teachers in predominantly Black primary schools, this is the first of its kind. Ford and Migles (1979) say that the qualitative aspects of the teacher-learner relationship can greatly influence the course of counselling. Kahl and Fine (1978) advise that counsellors should first learn to accept themselves before they can accept their clients.

Sue, Ivey, and Pederson (1996) argue that mainstream counselling approaches are white, middle class activities that operate with many distinctive values and assumptions. Bimrose (1998) refers to Wrenn (1986) who states that these approaches are ethnocentric or 'culturally encapsulated', holding at their centre a notion of normality derived from white culture, which is irrelevant to them and has the potential for alienating them.

Certain basic ingredients of counselling should be adhered to. A teacher who has not undergone the necessary training or workshops in counselling may lack self-confidence. It is thus imperative that teachers get exposure to counselling through training.

For Corsin (1984), the therapist must genuinely maintain unconditional positive regard, that is, he/she must avoid becoming judgmental. The therapist should not probe unnecessarily, and should avoid approval or disapproval. Further, the therapist should genuinely accept the client with understanding, and completely acknowledge the client's resources for self-understanding and positive change.

It is essential for teachers to know that good counselling depends on warmth, genuineness, empathy, effective skills of communication, positive regard and joint problem solving (Cheramic and Sutter, 1993). Rogers (1977) made it clear that the counsellor should not be passive during the counselling session because that might be interpreted by the client as being rejected. Similarly, the counsellor should not clarify his/her client's feelings in a cold and clinical way but should rather enquire with empathy and subtlety whether the reflections of the client's feelings are accurate.

According to Maslow (1970), one of the counsellor's most important tasks is to guide the client towards insight into his/her deficient needs. He said too, that the client himself/herself could play an important role in finding ways of fulfilling these needs.

An important aspect of counselling is the identification of client's needs, and the necessary intervention. Before needs can be met, they have to be identified and defined so that appropriate services can be developed and provided (Todd and Gilbert, 1995).

It is doubted whether teachers in predominantly Black primary schools understand clearly the process of counselling. They tend to expect a referred school psychologist to gather the necessary information about learners and to resolve the problem as quickly as possible. They do not seem to know that the process of assessment takes time and needs input from teachers and sometimes from parents as well.

A pamphlet issued by the N E D, entitled *Guidance in Primary Schools* (1990) describes assessment as the process of collecting data for purposes of making decisions about learners. The information gathered during assessment can be useful in deciding about the nature of the problem, where to place a problem learner, what needs to be modified in the instruction, and in reporting progress.

Assessment may include many activities, such as:

- Administration and scoring of formal and informal tests
- Diagnostic interviews with learners
- Observation of clients' behaviours
- Interpreting test results
- Group test administration
- Parent and teacher interviews
- Interviews with other professionals (e.g. social workers)
- Reviewing cumulative records.

Fairchild (1986); Cook and Patterson (1977) and Gargiulos et al (1981) found that teachers were unable to distinguish clearly the value of various information-gathering techniques. The individual assessment, teacher interviews, and parent interviews were viewed as the most valuable. Observation of learners and examination of their cumulative records were perceived to be less important.

In a study by Gilmore and Chandy's (1973b) study, teachers felt that psychologists were administering diagnostic tests more than any other assessment activity. Psychologists were further seen to be observing learners in the classroom less frequently than engaging in any other diagnostic work. There are some serious

psychological problems in learners whose parents may be struggling with their own unresolved difficulties. It is possible that these parents unconsciously transfer their frustrations to their children.

School psychologists are not only expected to assess but also to recommend and offer various forms of intervention to learners.

Intervention can be described as a general term referring to the application of professional skill to maintain or improve a learner's potential for ongoing healthy development (Stones, 1984). Intervention can be dichotomized into direct and indirect intervention strategies.

Direct intervention denotes actually working with the learners in an effort to improve their problems and counselling tends to be part of that activity.

Indirect intervention comprises strategies such as consultation, where attempts are made to facilitate improvements in learners' problems indirectly via meeting with parents or teachers.

Intervention include services such as:

- Individual counselling
- Group counselling
- Psychotherapy
- Family counselling
- Parent training (e.g. in behaviour modification)

- In-class activity for behaviour management
- Consultation with teachers to recommend intervention strategies
- Consultation with other professionals about intervention strategies

(Fairchild, 1986; Cook and Patterson, 1977).

In a study by Gargiulos et al (1981), teachers and principals rated recommendations about class placement, curriculum modification and behaviour therapy as the most helpful strategies offered by school psychologists.

2.4. TEACHERS AND COUNSELLING

Learners who experience difficulties should be referred to counsellors. Counselling or therapy sessions are cumbersome and unwieldy for teachers who are trained primarily to teach. Unfortunately private professional counselling services are unaffordable to most Black parents.

These parents mainly depend on educators to detect any problems that may be affecting their children.

Counselling and teaching activities in classrooms are often so inextricably intertwined that no true separation is possible, they appear less as discrete skills and more as a well-integrated amalgam.

David and Charlton (1987) compared teaching and counselling and stated that basic counselling skills are characteristics not only of counselling but also of good teaching. They stated that it is understandable if primary school teachers encounter difficulties in attempts to differentiate between the teaching and counselling elements of their classroom endeavours.

Dembo (1991) advised primary school teachers to observe themselves constantly. If they identify deviant behaviour in a child, they need to analyse their own reactions and see if they are really not busy reinforcing and encouraging the deviant behaviour. Usually a poor behaviour of a class is blamed on the children in that particular class when in actual fact it may be as a result of the poor teaching or the ability of the teacher to control that class.

Gilmore and Chandy (1973b) also found that those primary school teachers who were able to handle problem behaviour most successfully were those that minimised its occurrence in the first place. Hamblin (1980) suggested that it may be possible to gain a great deal of information regarding the home of the child which may lead to a clearer understanding of the child's behaviour.

Galloway and Edward (1991) indicated that parental involvement and participation in school events are of great value since they happen to be seen by their children as approval of their own involvement and makes them want to belong and share with others in school. Elliot and Witt (1985) showed that counselling programmes conducted by teachers and which involved parents were more effective than those which excluded parents.

According to Erikson, (1963), mental problems are the result of circumstances which prevent the individual from finding good solutions to developmental crises. Bandura (1977) on the other hand pointed out that a person does not just produce behaviour but consciously perceives and thinks about the results of that behaviour.

Thinking plays an important role in learning, and the individual not only reacts to stimuli, but also interprets them and makes hypotheses about the results of various possible behaviours in a specific situation.

Freeman (1986) pointed out that the cornerstone of good counselling from pre-school through primary school to adolescence would seem to be social cognition rather than intellectual giftedness. This reflects the need of the counsellor to develop such attributes as enthusiasm, easy communication skills, problem solving skills, humour, self-control, conscientiousness and a degree of intelligence.

Ivey and Simer-Downie (1980) stressed the fact that the counsellor or teacher needs to avoid anything that may jeopardise the child. The bulk of the ethical responsibility lies on the counsellor or teacher. The help-seeking child may become vulnerable and open to destructive action by the teacher or counsellor. There are carefully developed ethical guidelines for counsellors to exercise responsibility. Teachers also need to exercise responsibility.

Munro, Manthei and Small (1979) emphasised that in counselling it is essential that teachers behave as professionals in terms of confidentiality and that they grow in stature and be viewed as those who can be trusted. Pupils need to know that they can trust their counsellor and what they say will be kept in confidence. If this confidence is broken through the revealing of personal facts, the teacher may never find it easy to fulfil the role of the counsellor.

Lazarus (1981) emphasised the fact that behaviour therapy is not a one-sided influence process in which the therapist or counsellor effects changes in a child's perception and behaviour. It is a dynamic process of interaction between the counsellor and the child and is directed towards work on the part of the child. The child's motivation is a crucial factor in the counselling.

Winkley (1996) believes that something can be done to help the majority of children with emotional difficulties, although more can usually be achieved with children who are referred at an early age. Teachers may feel reluctant to refer, thinking they are 'labelling' the child, but the teacher, by not referring, may be condemning the child to a life of unfulfilled potential and unhappiness.

2.5 PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN YOUNG CHILDREN

The behaviour of children in a classroom varies considerably from normal to what Gray (1993) refers to as extreme forms of normal behaviour such as total silence, incessant movement, or an inability to learn. Children may also exhibit more bizarre forms of behaviour, such as hearing voices when there are none. Learners experience a wide range of emotional and behavioural problems.

Despite this, current provision concentrates very largely on those who appear to be failing to learn, and those whose behaviour causes disruption or leads to violence. The mismatch between problem and provision seems to be the fact that provision is made largely in response to demand, and demand is strongest when teachers suffer most (Gray, 1993).

Those who disrupt lessons receive the attention of teachers and sometimes school psychologists, but they probably receive very little sympathy; withdrawn pupils may have the sympathy of the teachers, and they are probably seen to be unhappy, but they receive relatively little provision or help.

Gray (1993) adds that unhappiness may be closely associated with classroom misbehaviour, and that the underlying problems of these pupils are easily overlooked. He says further, that there are four important perspectives on the phenomenon of disruption: (1) the pupils' self-perception, (2) the pupils' social performance with their peers, (3) the pupils' perceptions of their teachers, and (4) the teachers' perceptions of their pupils and of disruption.

Gray (1993) also feels that teacher stress is a major source of classroom disruption. In turn, this is likely to be a source of future stress, hence teachers, like learners, can become locked in a vicious circle of disruption. This suggests that one way to help deal with the problem of disruption may be to help teachers manage the stress of their jobs.

In most cases referral problems from primary school teachers to professional counsellors include the following (Severson, Pickett, and Hetrick, 1985):

- Social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties
- Learning difficulties

➤ Mental retardation

➤ Experiencing problems at home.

Problems associated with learning difficulties is very prevalent (Biehler and Snowman, 1990). In practice, a learning disability is identified on the basis of a series of assessments that contrast potential with performance (Clarizio and McCoy, 1983).

For Gargiulos, Fiscus, Moroney and Fauver (1981) the most common referral problem in learners is behavioural problems, followed by emotional problem and the least referral problem is physical problem. In their study teachers considered emotionally disturbed learners as their most urgent priority, and gifted as the least urgent (Gargiulos, Fiscus, Moroney and Fauver, 1981).

The above findings appeared to concur with the findings of Gilmore and Chandy (1973b) where teachers indicated that they wanted school counsellors to be more involved with emotional and behavioural problems and less involved with gifted learners. Dean (1980) found that both experienced and inexperienced teachers agreed that referral to school counsellors is essential for emotional and learning problems.

According to Abel and Burke (1985) counselling can assist learners to comprehend themselves and their motives to eradicate the state of being in denial and start admitting the truth about them. This may even help them to come to terms with the pain of separation, divorce, bereavement, loss, accidents and all the experiences that may be difficult to face alone. Teachers also provide counselling related to substance abuse. Substance abuse is known to be a devastating problem in many schools.

2.6 CONCLUSION

Since the amalgamation of various previously segregated Education Department, school counselling services need to be provided to all primary schools. School psychological services personnel including specialists like school or educational psychologists, psychological counsellors must be available for the children experiencing difficulties. Their professional functions can be broadly categorized into four units, namely assessment, intervention, administration and evaluation or research. Teachers who provide counselling services struggle a lot as they lack skills and proper training to offer effective counselling services.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The present study employed the survey method to examine the provision of counselling in predominantly Black primary schools. The study is a cross-sectional survey where questionnaire-based data were gathered in a real-life setting. The data lent themselves to basic descriptive statistics.

Questionnaires are popularly used by researchers to gather such information from respondents as their behaviours, knowledge, opinions, beliefs and attitudes (Heiman, 1995).

In order to maintain ethical standards throughout the research, the following guidelines were adhered to:

- Participants were informed about the study, and that their participation was voluntary.

- The researcher did not in any way take advantage of the participants.
- Respondents were assured that all information gathered for the study was for research purposes only.
- Confidentiality was maintained throughout.

3.2 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Letters requesting permission to conduct the field- work in the selected schools were written to the relevant authorities. These are contained in APPENDIXES A to C. Permission was granted from all the sources. The school principals were briefed about the random selection of teachers and the number of teachers that were to be included in the study.

The selected teachers were contacted and addressed about the study. Informed consent for participating in the study was obtained from the teachers, and they were thanked for their willingness to participate in the study

3.2 THE POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population from which the sample was drawn consisted of all the primary school educators in predominantly Black primary schools in the Durban South Region of KwaZulu-Natal. From the schools in this region, twenty primary schools were randomly selected.

From the selected schools, 20 teachers were selected randomly, yielding a total of 100 educators (teachers) who comprised the research sample. The sample comprised 70 females and 30 males aged between 23 and 50 years.

Kahl and Fine (1978) state that teachers are the best sources of information about counselling services in schools. The study was confined to teachers in predominantly Black primary school in the Durban South Region. Primary schools were selected for the following reasons:

1. An examination of the statistical data of referrals to the Mzamo Learner Guidance Service for psychological assistance revealed the following sources of referral:
 - 63% of learners from primary schools

- 14% are from special schools
- 10% are not attending schools
- 9% from secondary schools
- 4% from pre-schools.

2. The nature of counselling services offered by primary and secondary school teachers is different.

3. Primary and secondary school teachers' expectations about school counselling services also tend to differ.

3.3. THE RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Heiman (1995) says that the general research techniques that can be used are interviews and questionnaires. The present study employed the questionnaire which were designed to test the stipulated hypotheses.

The questionnaires (APPENDIX D) used in this study were designed by the researcher to gather the necessary information. They were also used in this study because they were less expensive and had an added advantage of taking less time to collect data than many other techniques. Also, they allowed respondents to respond in their own time.

The questionnaires were distributed to the selected schools by the researcher with the assistance of the superintendent of the Mafa Circuit in the Umlazi South District. Each questionnaire took about 30 minutes to complete, and was completed anonymously. The questionnaires contained both close-ended and open-ended items. The close-ended questions provided alternatives from which the respondent could select. This allowed speedy responses. The open-ended items provided the respondent with an opportunity to clarify his or her choices.

3.4. DATA COLLECTION AND TREATMENT

Data was gathered over a period of three weeks. This included distribution and collection of questionnaires. The data obtained in this study was analysed using descriptive statistics with the aid of a hand-held scientific calculator.

3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has described the method used to conduct the study which was a field study where samples were randomly selected and given questionnaires to complete.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Table 1. Age and gender composition of the sample (N=100)

Table 1 shows the gender and age composition of the sample of 100 teachers. Four percent of the sample were females and 2% males aged between 19 and 22 years; 15% were females and 7% males between the ages of 23 and 26 years, 24% were females and 9% males between the ages 27 and 30 years, and 27% were females and 12% males over the age of 30 years. The ratio of female to male was 7:3, and this ratio was more or less consistent with the population statistics of South Africa (Orkin, 1999).

Age	Female (%)	Male (%)
19-22 years	4	2
23-26 years	15	7
27-30 years	24	9
Above 30 years	27	12
Total	70	30

Figure 1: Marital status of the sample

Figure 1 shows the marital status of the respondents. 14% were females and 18% males who were never married. The married group comprised 32% females and 6% males, the divorced comprised 16% females and 3% males, and the widowed, 8% females and 3% males.

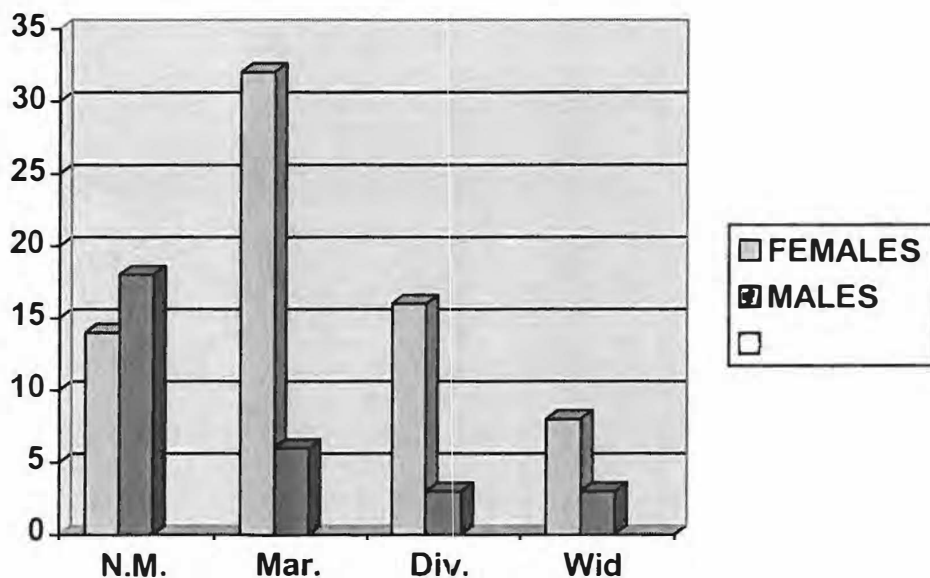


Table 2: Highest teaching qualifications of respondents

Table 2 shows that no member of the sample had a certificate qualification. 37% females and 15% males had a diploma qualification. 28% females and 15% males had a degree qualification. 5% females and no males had a post graduate qualification.

Highest teaching Qualification	Female (%)	Male (%)
Certificate	0	0
Diploma	37	15
Degree	28	15
Post graduate Degree/Diploma	5	0

Table 3. Teaching experience of the sample

Table 3 shows that 9% female respondents and 6% male respondents have teaching experience of between one and five years, 24% female respondents and 18% male respondents have experience between 6 and 10 years, 37% female respondents and 6% male respondents have experience of 11 years and above, whereas 6% male respondents have experience of 11 years and above.

Number of years	Female (%)	Male (%)
1 – 5 Years	9	6
6 – 10 Years	24	18
11 Years and above	37	6

Figure 2: Type of school respondents teach in

Figure 2 shows that there were 42 % female respondents teaching in Junior primary schools, 7% in Senior primary and 21% in Combined primary schools. For the male respondents, the figures were 0 % in Junior primary schools, 10 % in Senior primary schools and 20 % in Combined primary schools.

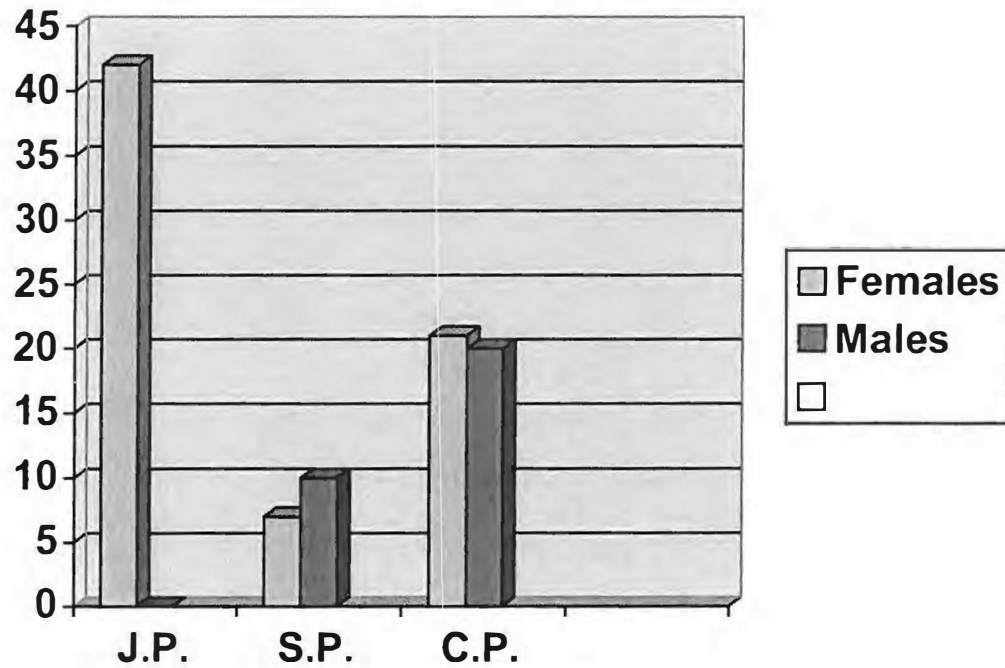


Figure 3 shows the distribution of the sample according to their post levels in their respective schools. For the females respondents, the distribution was as follows: 50% of the subjects were in post level one P1 (ordinary educators), 9% in post level two P2 (Head of Departments), whereas 5% were in post level three P3 (Deputy principals) and 6% were in post level four P4 (Principals of schools). For the male respondents the distribution was as follows: 12, 15%, 3%, and 0% respectively. The majority (62%) of the subjects were educators in post level one (P1).

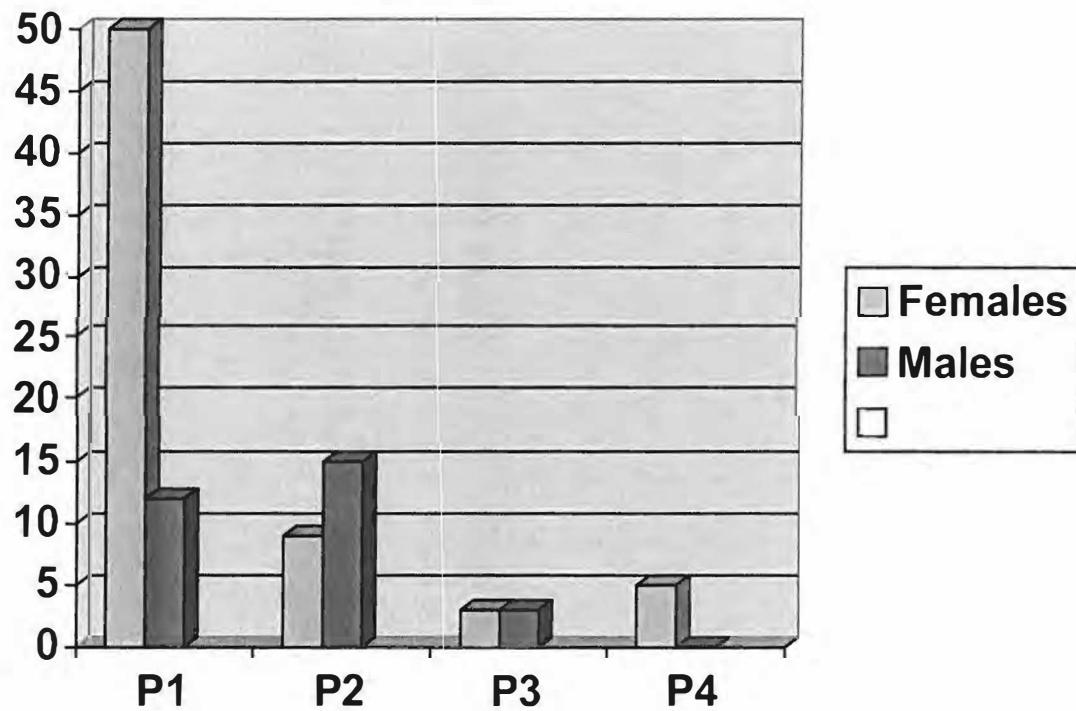


Table 4. Ratio of educators to learners in 20 schools.

Table 4 shows the approximate ratio of educator to learner in the selected sample of the 20 schools. The ratio ranged from 1:35 to 1:40, with a mean of 1:36,75. Fifty percent of the schools had a ratio of 1:36. Only one school had a ratio of 1:39, and one had 1:40. The number of educators at the schools ranged from 11 to 36, with a mean of 21,7 per school.

School	No. of educators	No. of Learners	Ratio
1	36	1300	1:36
2	14	500	1:36
3	35	1250	1:36
4	30	1200	1:40
5	11	392	1:36
6	32	1150	1:36
7	15	601	1:38
8	21	800	1:38
9	28	1000	1:36
10	12	450	1:38
11	19	680	1:36
12	16	600	1:38
13	22	800	1:36
14	19	700	1:37
15	18	650	1:36
16	27	1050	1:39
17	19	670	1:35
18	23	800	1:35
19	18	650	1:36
20	19	700	1:37

4.2 LEARNERS REQUIRING COUNSELLING SERVICES

Table 5: Educator perceptions of who needs counselling most.

Table 5 shows that 85% of educators indicated that both boys and girls were in need of counselling services. Fifteen percent of the educators believed that only girls required counselling services. None of the respondents indicated that only boys required counselling services because seemingly girls tend to have been exposed to various problems that sometimes they fail to succumb.

Gender	%
Boys only	0
Girls only	15
Both boys and girls	85

Table 6: Teachers' estimates of learners needing counselling

Table 6 shows the teachers' estimates of the percent of learners that were in need of counselling for personal reasons. This table shows that 35 teachers stated that more than 50% of learners needed counselling services for personal reasons. Another 33 indicate that between 30% and 50% of learners needed counselling services. Twenty-nine

teachers felt that between 20% and 29% of learners needed counselling services. Only 3 teachers felt that between 10% and 14% of learners needed counselling services for personal reasons.

Estimate of learners In need of counselling (%)	Number of teachers (N=100)
Below 5	0
6 – 9	0
10 – 14	3
15 – 19	0
20 – 29	29
30 – 50	33
More than 50	35

4.3 THE PREVALENCE OF EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS THAT REQUIRED THE SERVICES OF A COUNSELLOR

Table 7: Prevalence of difficulties experienced by learners

Table 7 shows that educators ranked the problem of becoming victims of sexual abuse as the most common among learners in predominantly Black primary schools. Aggression

towards other learners was ranked second; followed by victims of neglect, and of physical abuse.

Stealing, physical handicap, truancy, and sexual misconduct were ranked 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th respectively. Poor academic performance, soiling the pants and lastly wetting the pants were ranked 9th, 10th, and 11th respectively.

Emotional and behavioural difficulties	Frequency	Rank order
Victims of sexual abuse	76	1
Aggression towards other learners	58	2
Victims of neglect	56	3
Victims of physical abuse	47	4
Stealing	39	5
Physical handicap (e.g. visual)	32	6
Truancy	30	7
Sexual misconduct	19	8
Poor academic performance	18	9
Soiling the pants	11	10
Wetting the pants	9	11

4.4. PROFESSIONALS WHO PROVIDE COUNSELLING SERVICES IN PREDOMINANTLY BLACK PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

Table 8: Professionals providing counselling services in Black primary schools

Table 8 shows that 68% of counselling services were provided by educators on a voluntary basis. This was ranked first. Social workers employed elsewhere provided 21% of the counselling services, and ranked 2nd. Trained counsellors provided 11% of the counselling services, and ranked 3rd.

Counselling providers	Rank order	Frequency (%)
Educators on voluntary basis	1	68
Social workers employed elsewhere	2	21
Trained school counsellors	3	11

Table 9: Time when educators provided counselling services

Table 9 shows that most educators (61%) utilized short breaks for counselling purposes. This was ranked first. The next most frequently used time was after school hours (22%), and ranked 2nd, followed by 13% of educators who provided counselling before school began, ranked 3rd. The least utilized time was during the weekends (4%), and ranked 4th.

COUNSELLING TIMES	NUMBER OF TEACHERS (N=100)	RANK ORDER
During breaks	61	1
After school hours	22	2
Before school begins	13	3
During weekends	4	4

Table 10. Educators' perceptions about the need for counselling services

Table 10 show that 88% of the respondents said that counselling services were most definitely needed in primary schools and 12% said that they were definitely needed. ; none of the respondents expressed uncertainty or that there was no need for such services.

CHOICE	RESPONSE (%)
Most definitely yes	88
Definitely yes	12
Not sure	0
Definitely no	0
Most definitely no	0

Table 11: Educator's expressed need for training in basic counselling skills

Table 11 show that 97% of the respondents said that educators in primary schools most definitely needed training in basic counselling skills and 3% said that the training was definitely needed. None of the respondents felt unsure or felt there was no need for such training.

CHOICE	RESPONSE (%)
Most definitely yes	97
Definitely yes	3
Not sure	0
Definitely no	0
Most definitely no	0

Table 12: Teachers' views about parental involvement in counseling learners

Table 12 shows that 80% of the respondents felt that parents should most definitely be involved in counselling learners with personal problems. Fourteen felt that parents should definitely be involving in counselling learners with personal problems. Only 6% were unsure whether parents should be involved.

CHOICE	RESPONSE (%)
Most definitely yes	80
Definitely yes	14
Not sure	6
Definitely no	0
Most definitely no	0

4.5 CONCLUSION

The results of the study clearly show the necessity of counselling services in predominantly Black primary schools. There are critical problems that need to be addressed in schools, which clearly challenge the Department of Education to train or employ more staff in counselling services.



The results of the study revealed the importance of providing counselling periods in primary schools. This indicates the importance of in-service training for teachers in schools to assist in solving problems. The involvement of all stakeholders in the problems of learners needs support especially of parents. The study indicates that parents need to be empowered on how to intervene in their minors' problems.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

It must be noted that the results in the present study are likely to be reflective more of female rather than male educators as the former comprised 70% of the sample. However the results would be reflective of primary schools in general as the female to male ratio in the study was about the same as that found in primary schools in South Africa which is 70:30.

Moreover, the findings are considered to be reliable as the entire educator sample of males and females was sufficiently qualified to understand the basics of the nature, process and value of counselling. None of the educators had qualification that was lower than a diploma, and the majority of educators (85) had at least six years of teaching experience.

Given the high ratio of learners to educators in the study, educators are less likely to find sufficient time to provide counselling services. It is interesting to note that 15% of educators felt that only girls were in need of counselling. One possible explanation for this is that 70% of educators were females, who would likely detect problems in females more readily than in males.

Another explanation is the vast amount of information in the media and other sources which frequently highlight the prevalence of promiscuity in children, the prevalence of teenage pregnancies, and sexually-transmitted illnesses (STI's) in children.

The necessity of counselling is borne out by the fact that the large majority (97%) of educators indicated that at least 20% of learners were in need of counselling. Also, 88% of educators indicated that counselling was definitely needed in primary schools; and 97% of educators indicated that they were most definitely in need of training in basic counselling skills. This has implications for various stakeholders, such as parents, politicians, health professionals, and educators.

Among the emotional and behavioural difficulties ranked highly were victims of sexual abuse (ranked 1st), aggression towards other learners (ranked 2nd), victims of neglect (ranked 3rd), and victims of physical abuse (ranked 4th). No learner can be expected to function optimally in the presence of such serious problems. Further, this places a serious burden on the educators whose primary function is to teach.

The finding showed that the majority (68%) of counselling services were provided by the educators suggests that they (the educators) were working under pressure and needed to be highly commended. Some 39% of their services were rendered before or after school hours or during weekends. This suggests their commitment to helping their learners.

Ninety-four percent of educators indicated that parents should be involved in counselling their children with personal problems. However, the study did not explore such issues as whether the learners would be willing to discuss their difficulties with their parents, and whether the parents would be willing and able to provide counselling. This has implications for future research.

The findings revealed a need for the implementation and support of counselling services in predominantly black primary schools. It was important to conduct this study because of the learners' behavioural and emotional problems that teachers encounter in schools, which adversely affects the progress of teaching and learning. The study aimed to establish the need for counselling services in predominantly black primary schools.

The majority (85%) of educators indicated that both boys and girls were in need of counselling services. 35% of educators believed that more than 50% of learners needed counselling services for personal reasons. Lucas and Jones (1970) found that teachers' referrals of learners for counselling increased when counsellors were available.

CHAPTER SIX

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 CONCLUSION

The findings of the study clearly showed that there was a dire need for counselling services in predominantly Black primary schools. There were critical problems that needed to be addressed. Emotional and behavioural problems generally led to learning problems which makes the necessity of counselling more indispensable in schools in general.

The study set out to test three hypotheses:

(1) There are few or no counselling services available in predominantly Black primary schools. This hypothesis was accepted for the following reasons:

- 85% of the sample of teachers indicated that both boys and girls were in need of counselling services;
- 35% of the sample stated that more than 50% of the learners needed counselling for personal reasons; 33% said that between 30% and 50% of learners needed counselling;

and 29% said 20% to 29% of the learners needed counselling.

(2). Teachers in predominantly Black primary schools lack skills for identifying learners who experience problems that need counselling. This hypothesis was accepted for the following reasons:

- 68% of the counselling was provided by teachers on a voluntary basis, and 21% by social workers employed elsewhere.
- The entire sample of educators said either that they were most definitely or definitely in need of training in basic counselling skills.

(1) Teachers in predominantly Black primary schools are unable to provide counselling. This hypothesis was accepted for the following reason:

- Counselling in schools was provided during breaks, before or after school hours, or during weekends.
- No structured times were set aside specifically for counselling.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the above findings, the following six recommendations are made:

1. Every educator needs to be trained in the very basic skills in counselling young children.
2. Every primary school should appoint one trained counsellor who could also train educators at his/her respective school.
3. The community at large should be equipped with the appropriate knowledge and skills of identifying a child with a problem so that the matter will be reported to the relevant people like school principal, the police and \or the social worker.
4. People from the social welfare should be encouraged to perform their duties to the fullest in order to help that are ignorant and in denial.

5. People from Safety should be invited to the primary school whenever there are special occasion in the schools so that they will address the learners and warn them against the dangerous situations and people. Learners should be made aware of the fact that anyone who treat them badly need to be reported to the police or any adult that can be trusted so that he will be removed from the society

6. Parents should be taught to keep the lines of communication between them and their children open at all times for the children to be able to come to them with any kinds of problems. Children must know that they will not be discriminated in their families, there will be no biasness nor rejection.

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APPENDIX -A

P.O. Box 2424

Isipingo

4110

The Regional Manager

Department of Education & Culture

Malgate House

Dear Sir/Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am studying for the Master's degree in Education at the University of Durban – Westville. The topic of my study is: *The need for counsellors in predominantly black primary schools.*

I hereby request your kind permission to allow me to conduct my interviews and to distribute my research questionnaires at 20 schools that I have randomly selected. Five educators randomly selected from each of the 20 schools will participate in the research. This will take about 40 minutes of each of educator's time.

The questionnaires will be re- collected by myself. Strict ethical guidelines will be followed at all times. Should you require further information please feel free to contact my supervisor, Dr Chohan at 082700 9192 or myself at 082 495 1175.

Thank you

Yours faithfully

Thembi D. Mthethwa (Miss)

P.O. Box 24249

Isipingo

4110

The District Manager

Umlazi South District

Umlazi

Dear Sir

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am studying for Master's degree in Education at the University of Durban-Westville. The topic of my study is: *The need for counsellors in predominantly black primary schools.*

I hereby request your kind permission to allow me to conduct my interviews and to distribute my research questionnaires at 20 schools that I have randomly selected from your district. Five educators randomly selected from each of the 20 schools will participate in research. This will take about 40 minutes of each educator's time. The questionnaires will be distributed and re-collected by myself. Strict ethical guidelines will be followed at all times.

Should you require further information, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Dr Chohan at 082 700 9192 or myself at 082 495 1175.

Thank you

Yours faithfully

Thembi D. Mthethwa (Miss)

APPENDIX-C

P.O. Box 24249

Isipingo

4110

The principal

Umlazi

Dear Sir/Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am studying for the Master's degree in Education at the University of Durban – Westville. The topic of my study is: *The need for counsellors in predominantly black primary schools.*

I hereby request your kind permission to allow me to conduct my interviews and to distribute my research questionnaires at your school as it is one of the 20 primary schools that have been randomly selected. Five educators from your school, randomly selected will participate in the research. This will take about 40 minutes of each educator's time. The questionnaires will be distributed and re-collected by myself. Strict ethical guidelines will be followed at all times.

Should you require further information, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Dr Chohan at 082 700 9192 or myself at 082 495 1175.

Thank you

Yours faithfully

Thembi D. Mthethwa (Miss)

APPENDIX -D

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

I am studying for a Master's degree in Education at the University of Durban-Westville, and am conducting a study on counselling services in predominantly Black primary schools. Your kindness in completing the questionnaire will be appreciated and will help me to understand better the needs of learners and educators in terms of counselling. All information will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Please do not write your name.

A. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Kindly make a cross in the appropriate space below: e.g. Height

- | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|--|
| | Tall | Short | | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |
-
- | | | | |
|----|--------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. | Gender | Male | Female |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
-
- | | | | | | |
|----|------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2. | Age Group: | 18-21yrs | 22-25 yrs | 26-29yrs | 30 & above |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
-
- | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3. | Marital status: | Never Married | Married | Divorced | Widowed |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
-
- | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4. | Highest qualification obtained | Certificate | Diploma | Degree | Postgraduate |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
-
- | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 5. | Number of years as an educator | 1-5yrs | 6-10yrs | 11& above |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

6. Type of School

Junior primary

Senior primary Combined primary

Combined primary

7. Post-Level (P)

PI

11/11/2011

P2

P3

11

P4

B. COUNSELLING IN PREDOMINANTLY BLACK PRIMARY SCHOOLS

1. APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF EDUCATORS AND LEARNERS AT YOUR SCHOOL

EDUCATORS	LEARNERS

2. IN YOUR VIEW, WHO IS IN MOST NEED OF COUNSELLING FOR PERSONAL PROBLEMS?

BOYS	GIRLS	BOTH

3. MY ESTIMATE OF THE PERCENTAGE OF LEARNERS NEEDING COUNSELLING SERVICES FOR PERSONAL PROBLEMS:

Below 5%	6% -9%	10% - 14 %	15% - 19%	20% -29%	30% -50%	MoreThan 50%

4. RANK THE FOLLOWING LEARNERS' DIFFICULTIES FROM 1 TO 11 ACCORDING TO HOW PREVALENT THEY ARE IN YOUR SCHOOL (1-MOST PREVALENT; 11-LEAST PREVALENT).

RANK ORDER

- a. Poor academic performance
- b. Victims of physical abuse
- c. Victims of sex abuse
- d. Aggression towards other learners
- e. Stealing
- f. Sexual misconduct
- g. Wetting the pants
- h. Physical handicap e.g. visual, auditory
- i. Soiling the pants
- j. Truancy
- k. Victims of neglect

5. COUNSELLING SERVICES AT MY SCHOOL ARE PROVIDED BY (TICK AS MANY AS APPLICABLE):

- a. Educators on voluntary basis
- b. Trained school counsellors
- c. Social workers employed elsewhere
- d. Other: State _____

6. WHEN DO EDUCATORS MANAGE COUNSELLING AT YOUR SCHOOL?
(TICK AS MANY AS APPLICABLE)

- a. After school hours
- b. During breaks
- c. Before school begins
- d. During weekends

7. DO YOU FEEL COUNSELLING SERVICES ARE
GENERALLY NEEDED IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS?

- a. Most definitely yes
- b. Definitely yes
- c. Not sure
- d. Definitely no
- e. Most definitely no

8. DO YOU FEEL THERE IS A NEED TO EQUIP PRIMARY SCHOOL
EDUCATORS WITH BASIC SKILLS IN COUNSELLING?

- a. Most definitely yes
- b. Definitely yes
- c. Not sure
- d. Definitely no
- e. Most definitely no

9. DO YOU FEEL PARENTS SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN
COUNSELLING LEARNERS WITH PERSONAL PROBLEMS?

- a. Most definitely yes
- b. Definitely yes
- c. Not sure
- d. Definitely no
- e. Most definitely no

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND PARTICIPATION

Ms T D Mthethwa